

433 economic situation in Bornu is determined to a large extent by
439 changes in the world market price of export items which are now
433 a vital part of the local economy. The Kanuri are an agricul-
241 tural people whose staple crop is millet. Along with millet,
the main crop is peanuts, grown for sale and ultimate export.

• 243 Every farmer grows millet for his family. Should he have a
[438] surplus he sells it in the local markets. Most farmers also
244 raise peanuts as well. The nuts are bought by local trading
[442] companies, acting as agents for the government controlled
[655] Groundnut Marketing Board which buys the entire crop and
[439] sells it on the world market. Cow hides and sheep and goat
433 skins are also brought by the trading companies for export,
237 and represent an important part of the total economy. The West
436 African Pound is the basic currency unit and the shilling is
the unit of trade in the remotest sections of the province.
Maria Theresa dollars are still in evidence but are rarely used
as currency.

439 A network of European trading companies exists throughout
442 Northern Nigeria. Almost all of them have canteens run by
473 European agents scattered in larger towns throughout the region.
The largest of these is the United Africa Company, a subsidiary
of Unilever. Others, John Holt and Co., Société Commerciale du
Oest Afrique, Compagnie Française du Afrique Occidental, and A.
G. Leventis and Co., are multi-million-dollar companies with
[452] head offices in England or on the Continent. They all buy pea-
nuts, and hides and skins, and they buy through a complex system

425 practice is undergoing change. House plots in desirable loca-
241 tions in Maiduguri, the capital city, are bought and sold,
178 though in theory land for one's house is obtained in the same
manner as farm land--by asking the village head for a site to
build one's house.

2. Subsistence Economy and Cash Crops.

• 243 Millet is the staple crop of the Kanuri, and both sorghum
(*Sorghum vulgare*) and pearl millet (*Pennisetum spicatum*) are
243 grown. Planting takes place immediately after the first rains
221 in May and the grain is harvested in September. The growing
season is short as rain falls only in the months between May
and September and not at all for the remainder of the year.
Consequently there is only one crop during the year. Since
millet grows without much attention, agricultural labor is
[462] needed only during planting, weeding, and harvesting. Men and
women work together in the fields during these periods. Crops
must be sown shortly after the onset of the rains for the grow-
ing time is relatively short and any delay in planting might
reduce the exposure to rainfall which is necessary for a good
harvest. Late planting in a year in which the total rainfall
[73] is slight can be disastrous for a family. Really bad years can
mean famine, and though there has not been a major famine since
World War I, that famine is remembered as a catastrophe. Older
people calculate their age in relation to the year of the fam-
ine. In the villages millet which a family harvests in Septem-

- 243 ber is expected to last them for an entire year, and the months
221 of April, May and June are generally the hungry months, when
the millet supplies begin to diminish.

244 Additional crops of some importance are varieties of beans,
243 okra, rice, melons, squash, tomatoes, cucumbers and onions.
312 These are frequently grown as garden crops, near places where
there is a permanent water supply. They can then be watered by
hand, or through the use of shadoofs to raise water from rivers
to the higher banks.

244 Groundnuts are the primary cash crop of Northern Nigeria,
and the Kanuri plant large quantities. Almost all Kanuri fam-
ilies, even those in the larger towns plant a crop of millet;
in the villages, almost all plant a second crop of groundnuts
442 as well. These are bought by agents of the larger trading com-
441 panies for cash, and eventually are sold to the Nigerian Ground-
nut Marketing Board through which they are released onto the
433 world market. Millet is the basic subsistence crop of the Ka-
534 nuri, while groundnuts are the primary source of cash for the
Kanuri villager.

433 The Kanuri do not rely exclusively on agriculture. They
233 keep sheep and goats in their villages, which young boys take
out beyond the fields to graze in the mornings, returning in
the evening. Cows are kept, and fed by the same means, but
433 these are few in numbers. Certain Kanuri sub-groups, the Kwoyam
233 and the Buduwai, depend largely on cattle which they keep in
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[GEIDAM]

632 turn to their northern villages. A group of Bouzou work at
563 camel transport, and live in a cluster near the slaughter-slab
167 area. Another group of Bouzou work as water-carriers and come
[162] to live in Geidam between agricultural seasons. They all, up
to thirty in number, live in the compound of Lowan Ashek.

632 Lastly a group of pagans are to be found in a small hamlet
621 called Koldi, about 400 yards northwest of the town proper.

[162] There are forty-five households in Koldi, with a total popula-
[622] tion of 134. Koldi has its own Bulama, but Lowan Ashek serves
[651] as the Lowan of Koldi and is responsible for tax collection

632 there. The people of Koldi are largely pagan (kordī), and mem-
621 bers of the following tribes are found there: Banana, Kim, Ka-
563 bam, Ngizim, Kabalia, Mandara, Kotoko, Gwoza and Fulani. Most
177 of these are tribes found east and south of the Shari River,
whose people are pagan or partially Islamized. This is the
shatter-belt area between the Empires of Bornu and those of

[302] Mandara and Bagirmi. The women of Koldi all do their hair in
the Kanuri manner, and the people of Koldi are strongly accul-
tured to the Kanuri. In fact many Kanuri are found living in

[777] Koldi. They are characterized primarily by their lax attitude
[273] towards Islam, and are considered pagan because they brew millet
beer there. No beer is brewed in Geidam proper, so that Kanuri
youths wishing to partake of the local brew are forced to slip

[534] away unseen to Koldi. Drumming can constantly be heard in the
632 evenings from the direction of Koldi. The people of Koldi all
621 have farms of millet in the surrounding area, but in addition

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they specialize in the making of heavy reed mats (sogdis). Economic specialization along ethnic lines is a common characteristic of the area.

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Several types of economic specialty have been mentioned for differing groups in the Geidam community. Each of these is found localized in a particular section of a ward, where those who practice that specialty are grouped. Ibos and Yorubas are small tradesmen in their section of the Hausa ward. Butchers are almost all Hausas, and are to be found clustered together in one ward. Bouzous are either water carriers or transporters who use camels, and each group is found localized in its area.

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The people of Koldi make sogdis. Among the Kanuri proper, groups specializing in a single economic activity are also found living

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together in a single localized neighborhood within one ward. For example, the blind specialize in the making of rope, and live as an organized sub-community in their quarter. They have their own head, called the Kaigama, because he is to the Shehu of the blind, who lives in Malduguri, as the real Kaigama is to the Shehu of Bornu. Other Kanuri craftsmen can be found localized

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in particular sections. Tanners and dyers live in specific areas grouped around the tanning pits and the dying vats. Craftsmen who make the fine sitting mat (ba'll), potters and well-diggers are localized in their own sections; other types of craftsmen,

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however, are dispersed through the town. Many of the tradesmen are also found clustered in particular neighborhoods. Beggars are found together, and, as has been noted, the Ajia's kabuna tend to live in one ward.